Bernard hastens to his friend and discovers that Vivian is the same girl whose portrait he had accidentally drawn in Siena. He studies the girl and, finding her encouraging him, concludes that she is a coquette.
He warns Gordon against the pitfalls of his marriage with a coquettish girl. Despite his warning and advice, Gordon proposes to Angela and is rejected by her. Gordon then leaves for America where he marries Blanche Ever, a friend of the Vivian. Blanche is pretty, but silly.
Bernard visits the East and during his sojourn learns of the marriage of Gordon. He returns to New York and finds that Gordon and Blanche are not happy.

Bernard leaves for Europe where he once again comes across Angela in France. AH along he had been feeling wretched that he had wronged Angela by giving an unfavourable account of her to Gordon and thus depriving her of her marriage with Gordon. At Balanquas, Bernard discovers that he himself has been in love with Vivian for sometime. Things are clarified by Vivian, and Bernard realises his utter folly. He proposes to her and is accepted by her. Gordon now steps in and, learning that Bernard was engaged to Angela, accuses Bernard of betrayal of confidence. The two good friends fail out because of a misunderstanding over Angela. Angela, however, sets out to reconcile them with her tact, gentleness and admirable discernment.
The abominable passion of love has reduced the sensible Gordon to the "level of infamy", in spite of his scientific bent of mind, Gordon is unable to find an honourable way out of a difficult situation.
Bernard is so loyal to the canons of idea} friendship that he is insensitive to the fact that Angela was in love with himself. Angela is right when she says that "men are so stupid; it is only women that have real discernment."[36] Angela is a wonderful judge of character; she realises that both Gordon and Blanche are in love with each other but because of a misunderstanding and lack of goodwill they believed that they hated each other. Once this becomes clear to her, she

seeks to remove the misunderstanding between them and lays firm foundations of mutual affection and goodwill. Gordon is made to realise his mistake and apologise to Bernard for his hasty accusation of the latter. The friends are reconciled, and their eyes are opened to their lack of perception. Intelligent feminine sensibility, James says, is so sharp and acute as to possess remarkable powers of perception. Refined feminine sensibility is the answer to the problem of refining human relations.